

Why We End Up Giving Up - Acts 13:13 - February 3rd, 2008

Acts 13:13 From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.

- Luke, in his narrative, records this interesting detail about John Mark deserting Paul & Barnabas in Pamphylia to return to Jerusalem.
- We're only looking at this one verse today because there's something here for us that I believe we would be grossly remiss to miss.
- At first glance it seems like it was unnecessary for Luke to include this in his writing, however he did, and as we'll see, for good reason.

- I always like to ask the Lord why a particular passage or verse was important enough to be recorded in the Bible.
- What John Mark did was important enough for Luke to record for a number of reasons not the least of which is what it caused later.
- In Acts 15, Luke will tell us how Paul and Barnabas had a "sharp dispute" and parted company, all because of what John Mark did here.

Acts 15:37-41 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. NIV

- **Question:** "Why did John Mark desert them on this missionary journey and go back home to Jerusalem?"
- This is a good question, and it is one for which there are several answers.
- For our study today, we'll look at seven possible reasons why he ended up giving up.

- Have you ever felt like tossing in the towel and just calling it quits?
- Acts 13:13 can be, for you and me, a wonderful encouragement when we just feel like giving up, or in the past had "called it quits."
- Let's take a closer look at John Mark and learn from him why it is that we end up giving up.

- 1. Physical illness** - He may have become physically ill, possibly sea-sick.
- Travel back then was extremely difficult, harsh, and brutal and would take a physical toll on people's health.
- There is probably nothing worse than to be traveling far away from home and be sick, especially sea sick!

"It has been claimed that with most illnesses the sufferer thinks he is about to die! With sea sickness, the sufferer is afraid he will not die in time!"
Ivor Powell 'The Amazing Acts p 221

- 2. Too attached to family** - He may have become homesick.
- As a relatively young man, this would have likely been his first time away from home and the care of his mom.
- Often times, those closest to us, can represent for us, the greatest obstacle to God's call on us.

Genesis 12:1 1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. NIV

Matthew 12:46-50 46 While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. 47 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." 48 He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." NIV

Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his [own] father and mother [in the sense of indifference to or relative disregard for them in comparison with his attitude toward God] and [likewise] his wife and children and brothers and sisters--[yes] and even his own life also--he cannot be My disciple. AMP

- 3. Issues with authority** - He may have become disenchanted with the leadership change.
- Notice that Luke doesn't say; "Barnabas and Saul," this time, he says; "Paul and his companions."
- Perhaps John Mark was doing just fine as long as his uncle Barnabas was in that position, but took issue with Paul now that he was.
- Sometimes we take issue with those whom God has appointed and placed in positions of authority over us.

- 4. Fear of the future** - He may have become fearful of what lay ahead.
- Not only was travel difficult back then, it was dangerous, because thieves who would beat and rob travelers, leaving them for dead.
- Also, there was the probability of persecution and the potential for martyrdom on this difficult and dangerous missionary journey.
- The reality is that fear keeps most people from stepping out in faith, the antitheses of fear, and doing what God is leading them to do.

- 5. Resentment** - He may have become resentful of their mission to the Gentiles.
- John Mark was well taught in Judaism, and likely a staunch observer of the law as a good Hebrew.
- This missionary journey is to the Gentiles. Doubtless he would have held to the strong beliefs as it relates to the Gentiles.
- It's certainly possible that he held a certain bias or even resentment towards the Gentiles as that's how he had always been brought up.

- 6. Hard work** - He may have become disappointed with the work he was given to do.
- The ministry requires that we do very hard work, especially in the mission field as it were.
- It's very likely that John Mark had been given the work such as food preparation, cleaning, and other seemingly menial tasks.
- Sometimes we can become disgruntled because of the work that we are given to do. Especially if we're aspiring to something greater.

7. Not called - He may have become aware that this wasn't what he was called to do.

- Note that in verse two of this chapter, the Holy Spirit said to send Paul and Barnabas, not John Mark.
- Maybe he wasn't called to go in the first place. God's callings are God's enablings. God packages the empowering with the calling.
- There is no greater disappointment in life than coming to the realization that you're not called to a particular occupation.

"...recognizing who we 'aren't' is only the first step toward knowing who we are. Escape from a false sense of life-purpose is only liberating if it leads to a true one. Journalist, Ambrose Bierce reached only halfway. "When I was in my twenties," he wrote, "I concluded one day that I was not [called to be] a poet. It was the bitterest moment of my life." Os Guinness "The Call" p 6

- **Question:** Why did he go if he wasn't called?

- Perhaps it was because neither his Uncle Barnabas or Paul were actually with Jesus like he had been during His public ministry

- You might be saying at this point; "this is really depressing, I've thrown the towel in and given up for virtually all of these reasons!"

- Be encouraged, God can work this out for the good in the end like He did for John Mark.

- Keep in mind that this is the John Mark who, by the Holy Spirit, wrote the gospel bearing his name.

- Also, when everyone was deserting the Apostle Paul and only Luke was still with him, he called for Mark to come and help.

2 Timothy 4:9-12 9 Do your best to come to me quickly, 10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. NIV